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whatever part of the interesting history may appear to them most worthy of being preserved. Very often, every word thus collected and sent with an antiquarian donation is as so much gold, and ought to be scrupulously printed and preserved. How deeply interesting, for instance, to know that golden torques and other regal ornaments have been found on Tara Hill. How interesting, too, to all who love to read of Ancient Ireland, will it be to know something more of the discovery of the extremely valuable and perhaps unequalled hoard of golden ornaments mentioned in the note at p. 287. I have said "unequalled," because I believe the "find" exceeds all previous ones, both in value and number. Numerous instances might be mentioned, where the bare name of the locality and the circumstances connected with the discovery add very considerable interest and value—nay, sometimes its whole interest and value—to the article discovered: On the other hand, when an interesting antiquarian relic is presented to a learned society, which is supposed not only to preserve it with the greatest care, but also to give some account of it in its publications; and when, moreover, the donation is accompanied with a full history of the discovery, &c., how very discouraging to the donor, and, what is worse, injurious to the science of archæology, if no account or part of that history is given to the public! Our archæological science is far behind in this respect; and we have not, by any means, sufficient printed matter in proportion to the numerous, valuable, and truly national antiquarian treasures existing in Ireland.

THE PAGAN CEMETERY AT BALLON HILL, COUNTY OF CARLOW.

BY THE REV. JAMES GRAVES, A.B.

OF the unwritten history of the far back past, few pages have been so little read, and yet not one is so full of important and deeply interesting lore, as the sepulchres of the dead. Often, it is true, have the barrow, the cist, or the tumulus, been rudely torn open by the hand of the spoiler, or the idly curious; but how seldom have they been intelligently examined? It reflects but little credit on the archæologists of Ireland that no systematic attempt has ever yet been made to read this page of its "prehistoric annals"! Why have we not a society established with such an object for its aim? We have very properly associated ourselves to investigate the general antiquities of the island; to print its ancient literature, its music, and its romances;

why not have a club of “delvers,” an exploration society, with its corps of engineers, draughtsmen, and scientific observers, whose business it should be to examine the primæval sepulchres of the country, not idly, not irreverently, not as desultory diggers—but with due care, circumspection, and caution; noting down every peculiarity, making accurate measured drawings, and depositing, in a central museum, the *crania*, the *arms*, the *implements*, and *ornaments*, sure to be discovered in abundance? Here is work for energetic men to do—ay, and good work, too. In the meantime, no opportunity should be lost of placing on record the results of private explorations; and, in furtherance of such a desirable object, I beg to claim the indulgence of the Society, whilst I endeavour to describe the particulars of one of the most curious and important discoveries yet made in the field of Irish sepulchral remains—I allude to the exploration of the ancient Pagan cemetery on Ballon Hill. And I must the rather ask for this measure of indulgence, because I have not been myself present at these successful “diggings;” having, however, visited the locality, and seen the matchless collection of fictile vessels which have rewarded the exertions of the enthusiastic and lucky explorer, Mr. J. Richardson Smith, I may be allowed to have a voice in the matter.

Ballon Hill—situated about midway between Fenagh and Tullow in the county of Carlow—is remarkable for its regularly-formed conical shape and isolated position; rising, as it does, from the level and richly-cultivated tract, of which that portion of Carlow is composed. Although of no very great altitude, perhaps not more than about two hundred and fifty feet above the surrounding plain, it is a most conspicuous object; and its summit commands an extensive view—nine counties being said to be visible from it. Geologically speaking, the hill consists of granite, protruding, as I am informed, from, and insulated by, a tract of lime-stone. The surface of the granite, which forms the hill, is covered by a “bearing” of yellow sand and earth, of depth varying from about four feet to twelve inches. On the summit, where now stands a small pile of modern masonry, were formerly large and curious intrenchments, locally known as “the walls of Troy.” These (the hill having been until lately a common) have from time to time been all carted away by the neighbouring farmers for manure, so that not a trace of them now remains. The fact of the hill having been formerly a common, should not be lost sight of, as it tends to show that some feeling prevailed in the neighbourhood as to the sacredness of the spot—a feeling akin to that which happily saves many a rath and tumulus from wanton destruction. At present the greater part of the hill is the property, and forms part of the demesne, of John Lecky, Esq., of Ballykealy. As far back as the memory of the present generation reaches, discovery had been made, everywhere over the surface of the hill, of what the peasantry called “pans” or “crocks,” which, containing nothing but calcined bones, were invariably broken, when the usual incantations

did not change the bones into gold. Large numbers of fictile vessels had been destroyed in planting the trees with which the hill is now partially covered. One man said he had smashed four perfect urns in a day, another (a quarry-man) reported that he had broken *eleven* found close together in the quarry opened on the top of the hill.

In consequence of these reports Mr. Smith (then staying with his brother-in-law, Mr. Lecky, at Ballykealy) commenced a systematic exploration of the hill on June 14th, 1853; his labours have been resumed, at intervals, down to January, 1854, and the result has been the most wonderful collection of ancient fictile vessels to be found in Ireland. The "diggings" commenced at a large block of granite, resting on the hill side, immediately over Ballykealy house. This boulder measures nineteen feet by twelve in its largest dimensions; it is of a pyramidal shape, rising about eight feet above the surface, and extending three feet beneath it. This stone has been known from time immemorial amongst the peasantry by the name of Cloghan-na-marabhan, i.e. the stone of the dead. Mr. Smith states that it proved to be supported by granite blocks at each end;¹ and, on clearing away the soil, three human skeletons were found beneath it, huddled together in a small space not above two feet in length. The skeletons presented no trace of cremation. On further excavation, to such a depth that one could sit upright beneath the great covering stone, four large blocks of granite were turned over; and, at a considerable depth, a bed of charcoal was discovered, with broken urns of four distinct patterns. At another spot, also, a fine urn was found embedded in sand, but it could not be preserved. At a subsequent period, when I myself was present, similar fragile remains of fictile vessels were turned up, at the end of this boulder stone, externally.

I am informed by Mr. Smith that he next commenced operations on the top of the hill, where a large bed of charred wood and burned bones was struck on, two feet under the sod. In the neighbouring quarry search was made in spots where the "bearing" had remained undisturbed, and there an urn was found, laid on its side in the sand: it was quite hard and perfect, and presents an ornamental pattern of much interest. Many bones were found around this urn, and a few within it. The site of the old rath was then examined; here digging proved most difficult, as it was paved with great blocks of stone, set on end, and fitting close together. Great quantities of burned bones and charcoal appeared between the stones, and under the pavement; here half of an urn was found, and fragments of two others. The excavation was carried on to the depth of six feet, bones being

¹ So far as an after examination would allow one to judge, I am inclined to think that this boulder, one of many that are scattered over the hill, is untouched by

man, either as to shape or position. It has, however, evidently been excavated beneath and used as a place of burial in very remote ages, and, perhaps, by different races.

still found at that depth, but no urns. As the digging proceeded, on June 23rd, a large urn was uncovered, resting in an inverted position, and quite perfect. The sod, or *scraugh*, which had been used to cover the mouth of the vessel, and prevent the bones which it contained from falling out, still held together. This urn is rudely decorated with an impressed chevron pattern, and two nearly equidistant raised hoops or rings: it measures fifteen and a-half inches in height, and nearly fourteen inches in width, and is accurately represented in the accompanying plate (plate 1, fig. 3). It was not enclosed by a cist. Near it was found another of large size, and strong pottery, but broken. After various trials on other spots, which resulted in the discovery of many beds of bones and charcoal only, the work was resumed on the site of the rath, where a great layer of burned bones and charcoal was lighted on: at length a large slab, weighing about two cwt., appeared, and, on turning this over, a cist was discovered, two feet long by one foot wide, its longest direction lying north and south: it was filled with fine sand, in which lay an urn of very elaborate pattern, which, from having been squeezed in on one side while soft, would appear to have been placed in the cist in an unbaked state, a circumstance which, perhaps, may serve to indicate that the fictile vessels, found in such profusion on the hill, were fabricated on the spot. In the course of further investigation a five-sided chamber was found, walled in with long slabs in a workmanlike manner, and covered by a large stone. When the latter was removed, the cist appeared filled with sand. A portion of a thin lamellar javelin-head, or dagger-blade of bronze, lay near the top. It is very much corroded, but is curious, as presenting the only example of weapon or implement found during the entire operations on the hill, although bronze spear-heads of the usual form have been frequently found in the neighbourhood, two of which, dug up near the base of the hill, are in Mr. Leckey's possession. Deeper in the sand was found a fictile vessel about the size of a large tea-cup: it contained some very small bones, was as fresh as when made, and presents an example of carefully finished tooled work. It has been lithographed at full size (plate 3, fig. 13). At a greater depth in the sand was found a larger urn inverted, of less striking form and ornamental design. On raising this larger vessel from its inverted position, beneath it were seen, placed in a triangular position, three small smooth pebbles, surrounded by a few pieces of burned bones, and a little impalpable white powder; of the pebbles one was white, one black, and the third (which is much smaller than the other two) of a greenish tinge, spotted with a darker shade. All appear to be sea-shore pebbles, and numbers of a character similar to the speckled one, described above, may be picked up on the Wexford coast of the Waterford harbour, near Duncannon. I believe the markings on both to be derived from magnetic iron-ore. These stones were probably valued as charms or amulets. It is a remarkable coincidence to find

the following passage occurs in the detail of a recent examination of a "Pict's house," at Kettleburn, in the county of Caithness, Scotland, lately communicated to the "*Archæological Journal*" by Mr. A. H. Rhind:—"Smooth stones of various shapes and sizes, such as may be picked up from the sea beach, were found in several of the chambers, amongst the ashes and shells. . . . With these may be mentioned a prettily variegated and polished pebble. . . . It is somewhat curious that a pebble of precisely similar appearance, though larger, possessed an extraordinary reputation as a curative agent, until very recently, among the more superstitious of the Caithness peasantry. It has remained in the same family for many generations, having been handed down as a valuable heir-loom from father to son."—*Archæological Journal*, vol. x. p. 221. This ancient veneration for polished stones receives also a highly interesting illustration, from the fact of a crystal ball, supposed to be possessed of infallible curative virtue with regard to the murrain in cattle, being still preserved at Curraghmore, the residence of the marquis of Waterford; it was exhibited amongst the many valuable objects which crowded the Antiquity Court of the Great Industrial Exhibition of 1853, in Dublin, and is still resorted to by the peasantry in cases of murrain, being placed in running water, and the cattle allowed to drink of the stream which flows over it.

So far I have drawn the leading facts of this most curious and important exploration from information received, personally, from Mr. Smith, during a visit which I made to Ballykealy in the month of June, 1854, aided by an account of the diggings since given before the Archæological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, at its meeting of February 3rd, 1854, by the Rev. William Turner, vicar of Boxgrove,¹ derived, I believe, from a copy of the journal of operations, up to this point, kept by Mr. Smith. I had hoped to be able to embody so valuable a record in this paper, but am informed that having lent it to a friend, he has never since got it back. I am able, however, to supply this deficiency as to subsequent explorations, having been kindly furnished by Mr. Smith with a copy of his diary from that time. On July the 19th the diggings were resumed, and Mr. Smith writes:—"This morning with a friend I re-commenced digging by the rath, and have never discovered more extraordinary remains. Early in the day we found two large cists, in one of which was an urn, above thirteen inches in height, quite hard, and in great preservation, with the mouth turned down, and almost full of bones. Late in the day we came upon the largest walled-up place that I have yet found, three feet two inches long, by two feet four inches wide, and about a foot and a-half deep, covered by an enormous flag which (I am told) weighs sixteen hundred weight. It took five men with

¹ *Archæological Journal*, vol. xi. pp. 75, 76.

crows to turn it. When the flag was turned there was a large hollow space, the bottom being filled with burned bones—from the large size I conceive mostly of animals.” Subsequently, Mr. Smith having proceeded to his residence in Scotland, operations ceased; returning, however, to Ballykealy, in December, he commenced work again, and chronicles his diggings as follows:—

“December 20.—Began digging at the north side of the rath, where most of the urns were found in June and July last; the ground appeared to have been moved before, and nothing worthy of notice was found.

“21st December.—Discovered the remains of a small fire.

“22nd December.—Same negative result from a deep digging lower down.

“23rd December.—Tried the west, or upper side of the rath, and soon found traces of great fires, and two very deep pits. The charcoal lay in deep beds; we found an urn seven inches high, of a curious pattern, and ornamented by six raised hoops. It was in a very soft state, and differed from the others in having been embedded in charcoal instead of fine sand.

“24th December.—Proceeded with the excavation, which was carried to a depth of five feet; found many more pits, with many bones and deep beds of charcoal—no urns.

“2nd January, 1854.—Resumed diggings, charcoal still abundant; in the afternoon found the rim of an urn of a very handsome pattern. It stood reversed, but that portion of it which had been uppermost was gone; as the rim seems too solid to have decayed away, this interment was probably disturbed before. The part of the urn, which remained, was filled with large bones and charcoal.

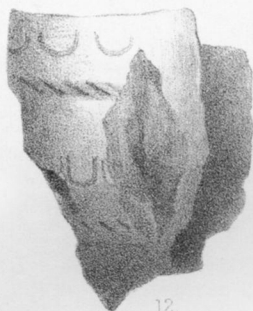
“3rd January.—Still found traces of great fires, with deep pits, which may have served either for burning human bodies, or sacrifices, or perhaps both. Early in the day a rotten fragment of an urn was found near the surface; in the afternoon a very large fictile vessel was discovered beneath the roots of a fir tree, which had grown completely through it in every direction; got the tree taken down, and filled a large tray with the fragments of the urn, which are in too mutilated a condition to be ever put together; but there can be no doubt it was the largest yet found.

“4th January.—Charcoal and pits—no urns.

“9th January.—Commenced digging again at the upper side of the rath—found a large cist most carefully built, and covered with a flag. The cist contained only large bones and charcoal. Replaced the covering flag.

“10th January.—Traces of fires.

“11th January.—Fires and pits—but no urns. I have formed the idea (judging from the quantity of charcoal found, together with pits, and cists full of the bones of animals and birds, with no human remains distinguishable) that a large number of the cists contained



12.



H. O'Neil

13.

Size of originals.

FIGURE VESSELS, No 2
Found at Ballin Hill, Co. Carlow

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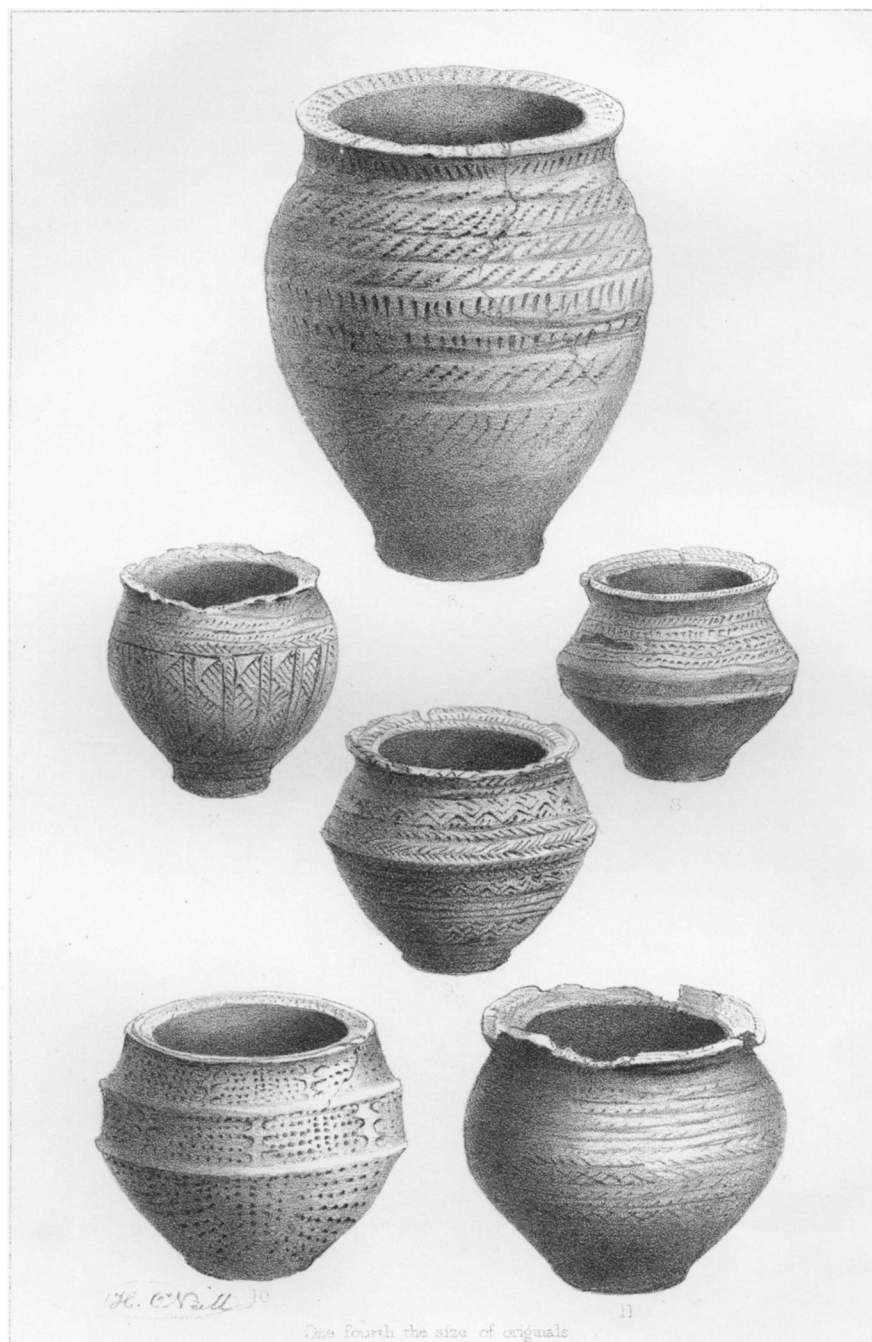


FIGURE VESSELS, N° 2
Found on Bailen Hill, C^o Carlow.



POTILE VESSELS, N^o 1.
Found on Ballin Hill C^o Carlow.

only the bones of the sacrifices, the remains of some great Pagan solemnities, for it is difficult to suppose that the bones of animals merely used for food would be thus carefully buried. That the sacrificers had few bronze implements appears clear; for from the large space excavated, and the number of cists explored, some traces of metal (besides the solitary spear-head already noticed) would have turned up, if implements, ornaments, or arms of bronze were in common use.

"16th January.—Having been prevented yesterday from going to the hill, the men worked by themselves, and at night brought me down by far the most perfect and beautiful urn yet found. It is impossible to give an idea of the rich beauty of the patterns which adorn this splendid work of art. In shape it differs from all the others, resembling two urns, one placed on the top of the other.¹—The men, having been left to themselves, went back to the rath, and in a little strip between the trees they found a cist of an irregular form, four feet wide, and covered with large flags; in the west corner, filled in and embedded with sand, this urn was found reversed. Three small fragments of bone were found in the cist, none in the urn.

"17th January.—Being encouraged by their find of yesterday, the men worked again in the rath, and soon discovered a very large urn filled with bones and charcoal. The condition of this vessel was so fragile that nothing remains but a trayful of fragments. From indications I have seen to-day I conceive that there may be another layer of urns in the rath, under a second or lower pavement."

Mr. Smith's notes end here; but I trust that he will at some future time continue his explorations, and test the validity of the conjecture above given. At all events, he has succeeded in obtaining a matchless assemblage of examples of the fictile art of the primitive inhabitants of Ireland. Of this collection thirteen have been drawn on stone from the originals, for the Society's "Transactions," by Mr. Henry O'Neill, and the beauty and faithfulness of their execution are worthy of the pencil of the author of that truly national work, the "Ancient Crosses of Ireland."² Mr. O'Neill has grouped the urns³ into three plates, those numbered 1 to 11 being drawn to one-fourth the size of the originals, and the remaining two at full size. It will be sufficient to direct attention to the beauty of ornament and elegance of shape presented by those marked 1, 2, 5, 7, 9, 10, and 13. The plates render further description unnecessary; but I may be allowed to quote some observations contained in the notice contributed to the Institute

¹ It is hoped at some future time to give illustrations of this and other fictile vessels not comprised in the accompanying plates.

² "The Most Interesting of the Ancient Crosses of Ireland, carefully Measured, Drawn, and Lithographed, by H. O'Neill." Large folio: London.

³ It may be of interest to remark that twelve of the singularly beautiful fictile vessels, represented in the accompanying plates, were sent by Mr. Smith to the Great Industrial Exhibition of 1853, forming one of the most interesting groups of the many which adorned the Court of Irish Art.—See p. 283, *ante*.

by Mr. Turner, already alluded to:—"The workmanship of these examples of ancient pottery is far more elaborate than that of the Celtic urns with which we are most familiar in England. The ornaments are not simple scorings, zig-zag, or other patterns, but tooled or chiselled, so as to present portions in high relief; amongst the forms frequently occurring on Irish urns are lozenges and scalloped patterns, with strongly projecting ribs, much decorated; the inside of the mouth of these vessels is usually ornamented with much care. In these particulars some analogy may be noticed amongst the sepulchral vessels found in Northumberland, preserved in the Museum of the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle, and that formed at Alnwick Castle by the Duke of Northumberland. A certain resemblance may also be traced in the urns found in North Britain."¹

In many cases the fictile vessels discovered on Ballon Hill were merely sun-dried, and mouldered away when exposed to the air. Most of the urns were but half baked, and to preserve them Mr. Smith found strong size to be very useful; he dipped the vessels into the size and then allowed them to dry. Many of them had neither top nor bottom, being merely hoops or circlets. It will be recollected that the remains of large fires were found all over the hill, the charcoal being of oak timber in general. In one place a well-like circular hole, faced with large stones, three feet in diameter and five feet deep, was found. This hole contained quantities of charcoal mixed with bones, and amongst them a fragment of a remarkably large human jaw bone. Amongst the calcined bones preserved by Mr. Smith are many of the species of deer, and others of the lower animals, mixed with human remains.

The invaluable collection formed by Mr. Smith, I made an effort to procure for the Society's Museum; however, naturally enough, the finder seemed very loath to part with the result of his "diggings." It is to be hoped that the collection, wherever deposited, will be preserved intact and unbroken; if separated and dispersed up and down amongst private persons it would lose half its value to the student of primæval antiquity; as seen together an inspection of the various remains lays bare a page in the history of the far past such as had never perhaps been before opened to the archæologist in Ireland. The imagination can picture to itself this sacred hill lighted up by vast sepulchral fires, conspicuous from afar; the assembled clan; the funeral feast on the sacrifices; the inurnment of the ashes of the dead—here, too, is seen the skill of the olden people of Ireland in fictile art, and as it is probable that these vessels were not manufactured especially for sepulchral uses, but formed the every day furniture of their dwellings, here we see also a glimpse of their domestic life. We learn that at the period when these urns were deposited they had a few bronze weapons, but that such expensive articles were scarce, and perhaps

¹ *Archæological Journal*, vol. xi. p. 75.

only distinguished the chieftain. The three polished pebbles, as before observed, were probably amulets.

Nothing is known of the history or ancient name of Ballon Hill. I have applied to that generous assistant of every student of Ireland's history and antiquities—Dr. O'Donovan, but in vain. He has never met a notice of the spot, but is of opinion, that, from its proximity to Dunrigh, a royal residence of the kings of Leinster, it may have been the cemetery of the Pagan princes of that district of Ireland.

FOLK-LORE.—No. I.

PORCINE LEGENDS.

BY WILLIAM HACKETT, ESQ.

THE old Irish manuscripts which circulate amongst the better class of our peasantry are generally collected into books bound after a rustic fashion, each volume being supplied with a list of its contents. In examining these lists, the title of one particular composition will frequently meet the eye, and must, therefore, have been highly prized by the transcribers. This is one, which, as it embodies and localizes a section of oral legends which prevail throughout the south of Ireland, may form a suitable introduction to the subject of folk-lore. The tract to which I allude is divided into two parts, of which the first (though sufficiently voluminous) is only an introduction; it is called the "Adventures of Toraliv M'Stairn." The second contains the achievements of the three sons of that hero, and is technically called the "Triur Mac," or the Three Sons. The substance of the whole story is this:—Toraliv was a nephew of the king of Denmark, and having become enamoured of a lovely woman, of whom he caught a casual glance, goes in search of her to various countries, and at length finds her in Ireland, at Tara, in the reign of (our Haroun al Radschid) Cormac Mac Art. She is daughter of a Tuatha de Danann nobleman, and is married to Toraliv, by whom she becomes mother, at one birth, of three sons—Crohan, Sal, and Daltheen. The father and mother go from Ireland in the "good ship" called the Mermaid, formerly the property of Mananan Mac an Lir. Toraliv having conquered many kingdoms and empires, loses his wife, becomes tired of war, and ends his days as a hermit. His wife, Fionabhartagh, dies, having given birth to a daughter in the land of the Amazons. Meantime the three sons are sent to be reared in Kerry, under the charge of the Gruagach of Slieve Mis. When they have finished their elementary course,